

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9455

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S E C R E T OSLO 1108

EXDIS

SECDEF HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER AND SECRETARY SCHESINGER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP, MASS, NO, NATO

SUBJECT: AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT ISSUE

REFS: (A) OSLO 1041 (B) OSLO 954 (C) OSLO 911

SUMMARY: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS OF INTEREST ON AIRCRAFT  
ISSUE INCLUDE MOST USEFUL VISIT OF MICHAEL MACDONALD  
(DSAA), INCREASED DETERMINATION ON THE PART OF  
NORWEGIANS TO REMAIN IN THE FOUR-NATION CONSORTIUM AND  
RECOGNITION THAT THERE IS NO  
EASY SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS CREATED OVER "ESSENTIAL ROLE"  
FOR DEFENSE COMMISSION. END SUMMARY

1. MACDONALD MEETING WITH NORWEGIANS MARCH 17-18  
PROVIDED EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR EXCHANGE OF VIEWS  
AND ENABLED NORWEGIANS TO SIGNIFICANTLY REFINE  
THEIR THINKING ON THIS COMPLEX ISSUE. DEFENSE MINISTER  
FOSTERVOLL WAS PRESENT FOR FIRST HOUR OF MARCH 17  
SESSION WHICH WAS ALSO ATTENDED, AMONG OTHERS, BY HEAD  
OF DEFENSE COMMISSION SECRETARIAT AND BRATTELI CON-  
FIDENT ERIC HIMLE, WHO IS PLAYING INCREASINGLY DOMINANT  
ROLE IN POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS HERE, AND MINISTER  
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OF DEFENSE COPRODUCTION COORDINATOR ANDRESEN. IT

HAS BECOME CLEAR FROM MACHONALD'S CONVERSATIONS AS WELL AS MY TWO LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS WITH HIMLE THIS WEEK THAT NORWEGIANS ARE PRESENTLY PURSUING TWO CONTRADICTORY POLICIES: (A) CONTINUE TO EXERCISE LEADERSHIP TO HOLD CONSORTIUM TOGETHER AND, IF SUCCESSFUL, TO PARTICIPATE IN COPRODUCTION SCHEME WITH CONSORTIUM BASED ON MOU; (B) ALLOW DEFENSE COMMISSION TO PERFORM ITS ESSENTIAL FUNCTION. THAT NORWEGIANS NOW UNDERSTAND PROBLEM AND ARE GEARING THEIR POLICY CONSIDERATIONS TO THE MOU IS, LCEARLY, A MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT IN ITSELF. HOWEVER, NO SOLUTION AS TO HOW TO RECONCILE THE CONTRADICTORY POLICIES HAS EMERGED.

2. MY ASSESSMENT AT THIS STAGE IS THAT NORWAY WILL PURSUE A COURSE OF CALCULATED RISK TO INSURE THE LONG-TERM BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION WITH THE HOPE THAT THE DEFENSE COMMISSION WILL ULTIMATELY ENDORSE THE DECISION. IT IS THIS COURSE OF ACTION THAT I EXPECT FOSTERVOLL TO RECOMMEND SUCCESSFULLY TO THE CABINET AND PLACE BEFORE THE STORTING FOR APPROVAL.

3. FOSTERVOLL, WHO WILL BE BRIEFING LABOR PARTY GROUP, DEFENSE COMMITTEE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE IN STORTING THIS WEEK, REMAINS IN FOREFRONT OF EFFORT TO INSURE NORWAY'S COMMITMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN CONSORTIUM. ERIC HIMLE ACCOMPANIED FOSTERVOLL ON HIS HIGHLY SENSITIVE TRIP OVER WEEKEND TO CONFER PRIVATELY WITH DANISH AND DUTCH DEFENSE MINISTERS (PARA 2, REF A). HIMLE REPORTS THAT THE DISCUSSIONS WERE FRANK, INFORMATIVE AND POSITIVE IN NATURE. HIMLE ALSO WILL BE ACCOMPANYING FOSTERVOLL TO THE MARCH 24 MOD MEETING. AS A RESULT OF WEEKEND DISCUSSIONS, NORWEGIANS HAVE ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING STRATEGY: IF THE FOUR NATIONS ARE ABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THE 24TH, NORWAY ENVISAGES A SERIES OF FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSIONS TO FINALIZE THE TEXT OF THE MOU; IF, HOWEVER, SERIOUS DISAGREEMENTS (RESULTING FROM PROBLEMS WITHIN AN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY OR OVER TEXT OF MOU) ARISE ON THE 24TH, NORWAY WOULD OPPOSE FURTHER DISCUSSION IN AN EFFORT TO KEEP THE CONSORTIUM TOGETHER AND PROPOSE AN ADDITIONAL MOD MEETING AT A LATER DATE.

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4. TO COMPLETE OUR COVERAGE OF POLITICAL SPECTRUM IN NORWAY AS ISSUE MOVES TOWARD CONSIDERATION BY NORWEGIAN STORTING, I PLAN, WITH FOSTERVOLL'S ENTHUSIASTIC BLESSING, TO CONFER WITH LARS KORVALD, CHAIRMAN CHRISTIAN PEOPLE'S PARTY, AND DAGFINN VAARVIK, CHAIRMAN CENTER PARTY, AT EARLIEST APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY. MY LUNCH WITH PRIME MINISTER BRATTELI (PARA 5,

REF B) IS NOW SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 19.  
BYRNE

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## Message Attributes

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